

32 Via Romana

8 May 1909

46, Gordon Square,

Bloomsbury.

Saturday.

My Billy -

Whether you will get this
or not I don't know. For
there are rumours of
another strike in Paris.
In which case I shall be
without news of you or
Julian probably. It is
too awful to contemplate
& I think I should better
be first train home.
You are still in the
train on your way
to Bale now. & I am

scribbling a line after
dinner before we go out
to hear a concert in the
Piazza Signoria which they
say will be very good!
You see if you had
stayed you might even
have had music? I
wish I knew of your
safe arrival. I feel a
profound mistrust of your
capacity to evade all the
sharks in the way. but I

suppose you will. I went
& painted Pezia into
more or less success this
morning. We had lunch
with her & Philip & the
eternal Count & we left
quite soon afterwards.

Pezia told me that she
had been in love with
George. but it was only
a passion of extreme
youth & not her most
serious affair. She still
thinks him charming &
I think blames me for
having broken with him.

We also discussed as usual
child. with & religion.

We had our usual tea
at Doney's but it was

very melancholy. & we went
for a walk in the Casine
& discussed my plans for
spending a winter in Paris.

But you should have
seen how melancholy we
were as we returned from
the station last night & how
mournfully we lamented
your departure. Are
you feeling cheerful? I
hope not. Widow C.

& Miss A. were out-tomorrow
so I had to sit next to the
Signorina which was trying.
I fear that will be my
permanent fate when
they are gone. Write me
my letters for I shall soon be
very unwell. Yrs W.B.

32 Via Panama.

9 May 1909

46, Gordon Square,

Bloomsbury.

Sunday.

My Billy.

I had your Milanese letter this morning & by now I can fancy you talking to Adrian at Fitzroy Sq. & comparing your pension experiences. Of course you may be sitting somewhere in France in reality, & not come by aphasia. We wondered today what you would do if you found all the railways in strike when you got to France, but decided that you would act sensibly. From all we can hear, however, the strike

has not begun yet. If it
does it will be very tiresome
but I suppose letters will
somehow be conveyed. Our
concert last night was a
failure. On our way to it
we met Jack & Eric who
told us that the crowd
was dense & unpleasant &
the music inaudible, so we
went & had coffee at fair.
Mims & Ken came home.
Tonight there are fireworks
at San Minato which make
a terrific noise even here.
but it is cold & rainy & we
are staying at home. We
went this morning to High
Mass at Sta Maria Novella.

The priests wore beautiful robes
white & pale gold. The music
was harmonious & we sat
& looked at the gorgeous old
glass windows. It struck me
as being rather like the
opera. It was really a very
carefully arranged work of
art & appealed to all men's
senses, even smell. You would
have enjoyed it: & perhaps
could have described it, which
unluckily I can't. This evening
we walked in the Boboli
Gardens, which you ought to
have seen. I shall tell you
that about everything I can.
They are full of shady alleys
& terraces & ponds literally
red with gold-fish. & beech
trees in terra-cotta pots like
Mrs. But it was too cold

& thunderous. We talked a
little mournfully of your
marriage. Widow Campbell
goes early tomorrow. Her cough
is worse than ever & she will
probably die soon. Miss Adams
is catching it too. I had
a letter from Sam this morning
quite dull. & one from Walter
who is in favour of my con-
sulting an architect about H.P.S.
& suggests Paul Phipps who, he
says, would do it cheaply. I
used to meet him at dances
in my youth. Walter seems
to think we could turn H.P.S.
into flats for £1000 but I
don't suppose he knows much
about it. If we could I believe
it would be worth our while
but we can discuss it when we
are at home. This time for tonight
I shall be sitting in Gordon St.
Wm V.B.

32 Via Romana
Florence.

~~40, Gordon Square,~~

~~Bloomsbury~~

1909
May 11

My Billy

After all the Paris strike
seems to have evaporated.

Perhaps Italian papers are
excitable. So I hope we
shant be cut off from all
news. I suppose I cant
hope to hear from you till
tomorrow evening. It has
been raining most of today
& so we stayed at home.
This morning & in the after-
noon went again to the
Borghese, where you may
remember that you were
so tiresome. Then we had

my usual tea at Doney's,
& took my usual walk to
San Gimignano, during the whole
of which we conversed affably
in French! The widow's affair
is so bad that she put off
going to Assisi, but threatens
to go tomorrow. I know the
unfortunate Miss [redacted] who
find herself [redacted] in Italy with
a corpse in [redacted] hands soon.
• She tells me she hardly knows
Mr C. & has not come abroad
with her because she knows
a cousin of his. These blots
are the result of trying to
make my pen work better.

Miss Murray is getting more &
more disagreeable. She tried to
make the unfortunate Eric go
with her today to get her mother
a permesso to see over the
barracks (at all places) & then
made a half-hearted attempt
to get me to go. But she sees
I don't like her & she doesn't
like me, so I have no fear
of being entrapped.

Plive says that you owe
him 71 fr. 50 c. in case you
are doing your accounts. He
also says that if you should
happen to be going by road in
Sg., but not otherwise. Would
you mind looking in the
study for a large red volume
of Lucas' Lamb. which the
London Library wants & sending
it back to them with your

own books - or my old cook
would read it - if you told her
to. There's no hurry about it.
I suppose you are now feeling
very happy at the Opera. How
are Adeline & Saxon? Give
them both my love. I wish
they would write to me. I
am badly in want of letters.
Our packet came at last
today, but contained nothing of
interest - A mad, half type.
written letter from Mr. Cornish
asking us to take tickets for
a lecture by a Mr. Secker who
knows far more about modern
French literature than anyone
else alive. She asks (live) to
communicate with her about
him. but we don't know what
she means. Have you heard
anything of Lytton? He seems to
have disappeared. Yours etc.

32 Via Rumeana

1909

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.

May 11

My Betty.

No letter from you today.
It is a great disappointment.
I hope we may arrive W.
tomorrow morning if you
get home safely on Sunday.
The weather has improved
here though I still stick
to my winter clothes. I
bought myself another
hat in the market place.
a large black one which
with I hope will last very
handsome at many
furnishings for several years

to come. Our sight-seeing
itinerary consisted of the Cathedral
Museum where there are some
very good things & the
church of Or San Michele
which is really a wonderful
place & which you ought
to have seen. It has a
beautiful dim blue ceiling
with dull gold stars in it
& might have inspired
you to one of your happiest
descriptive efforts. Our
pension was as usual
the widow & virgin have
some & apparently chose the

worst train in the day for
getting to Arrise. I had to
sit next to the Spaniard &
shout French to her at dinner
which is rather terrible, while
Clive talked to the old American.

How sick I should soon get
if meals with all these people.
In fact I am already looking
forward to my solitary &
charlè dinner table & English
food. If there is a per-

formance of Armide in the
week after we come back
would you mind taking
tickets for us. amphitheatre
stands if possible. We have
decided to start back on
Friday week getting home
as you did on the Sunday.

[My pen again]

- Olive wishes me to draw your attention to the fact - that his article on the Carlyles appeared last week. I shall leave it now & leave this letter open till I see whether I have me from you tomorrow morning.

Wednesday. Your letter has come. I am glad your parachute was safely lost. I feared at least for your chastity. Weren't we right about Adieu? You will have an exciting summer I expect with Olive on the scenes again! I think she must mean to make me more attempt on H. Y.

We are just off. Were the girls at La Mairie Novella. I'm afraid you are delighted to be at home again - aren't you?

Yours V.B.

32 Via Rnuance
Florence.

1909

46, Gordon Square,

Bloomsbury May 16

My Billy.

Whether you write two letters
in a day or not, I only get
one a day, so continue your
practice. Is Ottoline becoming
my rival in your affection?
I am suspicious. You will
have a desperate liaison with
her I believe, for I rather
think she shares your Sapphic
tendencies & only wants a
little encouragement. She once
told me that she much
preferred women to men &
would rather they trouble
themselves to know a woman
she liked, but would never
be the same for a man. //.

I had not brutally said that
I generally preferred men,
what might not have
happened? What is this
mysterious exhibition of the
fraternal, I am curious to know!
It cannot be the New English
for that is the Suffolk Gr.
We saw the John I think in
his studio when it was half
finished. It looked then as
if he had already spilt it
by painting too long upon it.
I cannot of course say yet
whether I should agree with
your acute criticisms. As for
Marry Davis, whose work I

think but am not sure I
know. I am inclined to be
sceptical. But we shall
see. We spent this morning
at the Academia, which of
course you did not half see.
I came more than ever to
the conclusion that the
Primavera is one of our
greatest pictures ever painted.

We had lunch yesterday
with Razia. Pasolini was
there & actually told Clive
that although he thought ^{her} ~~him~~
charming he quite saw that
he was a fearful snob.
The Herberts had stayed in
Rome & Pasolini had tried to
be polite to them, but they had
given themselves great airs

& were incredible. He thought
George must have been much
influenced by them. Last night
as we sat on our verandah
we saw a fire fly. Wasn't it
romantic? It looked very
ghostly, a tiny white point of
flame floating about in the
garden - I thought at first it
must be your disembodied
spirit come to visit me. It
was really lost at last &
is still. We are going up to
call on the Berensons this
afternoon. This time next
week I shall be in England
& very nearly in London.
We have been at last given our
long expected invitation to stay with
the Freshfields in June. Clara Bates
has also written asking me to go &
see her. I shall go when we are back.
Go on writing till Wednesday morning.
Yours V.B.